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Paper Urges Don't Close Church Doors

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Mississippi Methodist Advocate called upon its readers Wednesday "to seek a cure for the illness which has come . . . as a result of over-exposure to the virulent disease of hate and suspicion planted by subversive forces in our midst."

The state Methodist newspaper printed an editorial about a foreign educator — a "lady from India" — who was "evicted from Jackson churches."

The editorial did not mention the educator by name but described her as "a diminutive lady, a person of high rank in her own country, a doctor of philosophy in political science, a product of a Methodist University (and) a guest of the State Department."

"What happened made explanations impossible and apologies by concerned Christians extremely difficult," the editorial said.

"To shut the door of a church to international guests," it said, "creates not only grave international incidents but has a devastating effect on our missionary endeavours."

Several Methodist churches in Jackson have been the target of "pray-in" attempts by bi-racial groups, mostly from nearby Tougaloo College, recently.

Last Sunday two Methodist Bishops, one a Negro, were turned away from Galloway Memorial Methodist Church, the largest Methodist church in Mississippi.

"The lady from India was deeply hurt at being shoved out

of a Methodist church which preaches a universal gospel and sends missionaries to promote peace and good will around the world," the editorial said.

"These incidents create a very bad image of us and close the door of our hearts to Christ."

"We have compromised our church and placed our Board of Missions in a most difficult position."

"Methodist doors of friendship and communication," the editorial said, "must never be closed to any of God's children."

(At one Jackson Methodist church, such a person as described in the editorial mentioned above was denied admission when accompanying several Negroes, but was admitted when she returned alone.)